DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 954 CG 023 909

TITLE	Schools and the Community: A Necessary Partnership: A Guide to Interagency Collaboration.
INSTITUTION	Alberta Dept. of Education, Edmonton. Education Response Centre.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-7732-0429-6
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	57p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Agency Cooperation; Agency Role; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Problems; Foreign Countries; Models; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; *School Community Relationship; Student Problems
IDENTIFIERS	Alberta

ABSTRACT

The problems facing students and families in Alberta, Canada, have been recognized as community problems that require community solutions. Interagency collaboration has become a necessity indicative of the changing times and the global focus on integration rather than isolation. Interagency collaboration is an arrangement in which agencies work together to enhance service delivery to clients. Students face problems which go beyond those traditionally considered to fall within the mandate of schools although these problems effect the performances of students. Consequently it is in the best interests of educators to work cooperatively with other agencies to solve problems. Many types of interagency collaboration can be identified. Often two or more are incorporated in a service delivery model. These types of interagency collaboration include: referral and followup; information sharing and networking; case consultation; client teams; shared location; staff loan; joint training; purchase of service contracts; joint policies and procedures; joint intake and assessment; materials exchange; joint planning; joint program design, operation, and evaluation; and joint funding. The successful development and implementation of a collaborative model depends on a well thought out, systematic strategy. These steps are usually involved: (1) know your organization; (2) identify needs; (3) identify resources; (4) establish/solidify partnerships; (5) formulate goals and objectives; (6) develop an action plan; and (6) evaluate. (Survey forms and a bibliography are included.) (ABL)

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SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY:

A Necessary Partnership

A Guide to Interagency Collaboration

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ALBERTA EDUCATION CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Alberta. Education Response Centre.
Schools and the community : a necessary partnership : a guide to interagency collaboration.

ISBN 0-7732-0429-6

1. Community and school -- Alberta. I. Title.

LC221.4.C2A3.A333 1991 370.193 1

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SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY: A NECESSARY PARTNERSHIP

A Guide To Interagency Collaboration
(Document Summary)

INTRODUCTION

Schools and community agencies have been collaborating in various ways for many years. However, the concept has been "reborn" due to social and economic conditions that are here to stay. Today we recognize the problems facing students and families as community problems that require community solutions. Interagency collaboration has become a necessity indicative of our changing times and our global focus on integration rather than isolation.

The purpose of this resource guide is to suggest what can be done collectively to meet the challenge, to offer some guidelines in establishing partnerships, and to provide a model for interagency co-operation.

PART I WHAT IS INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

Interagency collaboration is an arrangement in which agencies work together to enhance service delivery to clients. Students today face problems and situations that go beyond those traditionally considered to fall within the mandate of schools. They do, however, affect the performances of students. Consequently, it is in the best interests of educators to work co-operatively with other agencies to solve such problems.

The Alberta Education Policy Manual (1989) states that "achievement of the broader goals of education must be viewed as a shared responsibility of the community. Maximum learning occurs when the efforts and expectations of various agencies affecting children complement each other . . . . " Interagency collaboration is one way to effectively share this responsibility within the community.

While the necessity for interagency collaboration is becoming more and more evident, schools and agencies alike face potential obstacles to good collaborative practices. Five of these challenges are listed below.

Policies. While these can be complementary and promote collaboration, they can also be restrictive and rigidly enforced.

Climate. The atmosphere in which co-operative efforts are attempted has a major influence on the success or failure of these efforts. Many factors contribute to the predominant organizational climate, some of which are: attitudes, support, priority, timing and organizational stability.

People. There is no other single variable as important to interagency success or demise as the individuals and personalities involved.

Resources. The availability and nature of assets (money, people and facilities) has a profound influence on interagency efforts.

Process. The sequence of actions undertaken by the interagency group has a critical impact on the success of the collaborative effort.

In spite of these potential obstacles, there are benefits to be derived from collaboration:

- improved accessibility of service
- reduced fragmentation and duplication
- increased staff effectiveness
- enhanced organizational efficiency
- improved public relations.

PART II TYPES OF INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Many types of interagency collaboration can be identified. Often two or more are incorporated in a service delivery model. The combinations and permutations are influenced by the needs and characteristics of the communities accessing them.

Referral and Follow-up. Procedures that direct clients from one agency to another.

Information Sharing and Networking. Individuals from diverse agencies flexibly linked together by a shared focus and a desire to exchange information and pool resources.

Case Consultation. Staff from one agency ask advice from staff at another agency about particular clients; staff of agencies who are providing services to the same family or child meet in case conferences.

Client Teams. Staff from two or more agencies routinely co-ordinate their activities to meet the needs of a number of mutual clients.

Shared Location. Two or more agencies have staff at the same location, or staff of one agency provide services in the facility of another agency.

Staff Loan. Staff from one agency work under the direct supervision of another agency.

Joint Training. Staff members representing different services acquire and practise new skills together.

Purchase of Service Contracts. Formal agreements between agencies, individuals or government departments to obtain services.

Joint Policies and Procedures. Guidelines for interaction established between agencies.

Joint Intake and Assessment. Common system for screening clients and diagnosing their needs.

Materials Exchange. A mechanism for sharing equipment, products and materials among staff and agencies.

Joint Planning. Agencies engaged in a joint, structured planning process for the purpose of assessing needs and priorities.

Joint Program Design, Operation and Evaluation. A step beyond planning, this involves the implementation of joint solutions to defined problems in relation to available resources.

Joint Funding. Two or more agencies share the operating costs of a mutual project.

PART III STEPS TO INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

The successful development and implementation of a collaborative model depends on a well thought out, systematic strategy. The steps listed below are usually involved in the implementation of an effective collaborative model.

- Know your organization
- Identify needs
- Identify resources
- Establish/Solidify partnerships
- Formulate goals and objectives
- Develop an action plan
- Evaluate.

Questionnaires in the appendices are available to assist in the implementation of the steps listed above.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Education Response Centre wishes to acknowledge the following individuals who assisted in the development and production of this resource.

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INTRODUCTION

Schools have been called "the eyes, ears and mouths of society" with respect to young people. In school we see their strengths, their concerns, their fears, their insecurities and the ways they choose to cope on a daily basis. This provides us with invaluable information and also obliges us to share what we have learned.

It is no longer feasible to be territorial or "mandate bound" in the delivery of services. The needs of students and families today are such that boundaries become blurred and it is no longer as easy to say "this is my responsibility and that is yours." These are "our" children in a much larger sense; society as a whole must take responsibility to ensure their healthy development.

Today we recognize the problems facing students and families as community problems that require community solutions. In recognition of our collective responsibility, the most viable course of action requires the co-operation, collaboration and commitment of all partners. This can be achieved when service providers and agencies begin to integrate and connect the total learning experiences of the child.

Interagency collaboration is not a new idea. Schools and community agencies have been collaborating in various ways for many years. However, the concept has been "reborn" due to social and economic conditions that are here to stay. Interagency collaboration is more than an optional activity. It has become a necessity indicative of our changing times and our global focus on integration rather than isolation.

PURPOSE

This resource guide was written for the following purposes:

- to help school staff and senior administrators improve services to students through better collaboration between organizations,
- to help school personnel promote and initiate local interagency co-operation,
- to offer interagency participants guidelines for establishing partnerships within their community,
- to apply an educational perspective to interagency concepts, and
- to provide a model for interagency co-operation that is applicable to urban and rural communities, and to preventative as well as remedial programs.

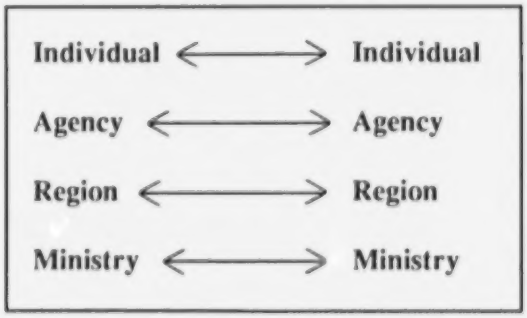
PART I

WHAT IS INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

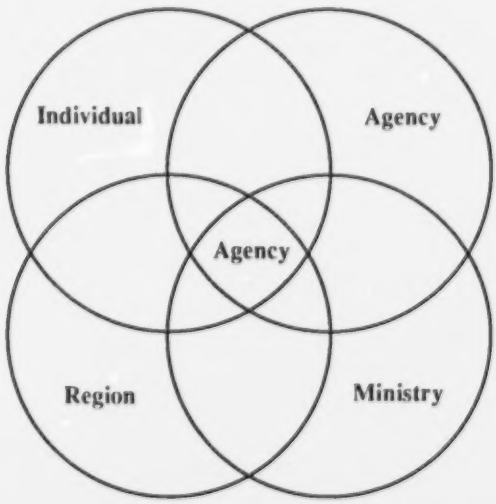
- Interagency collaboration occurs when two or more agencies work together to enhance service delivery.

- Interagency collaboration can include initiatives that are preventative (or proactive) in nature as well as those that are more focused on remedial (or reactive) programs.

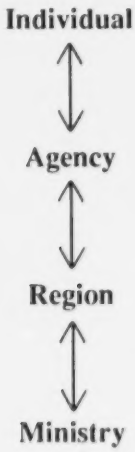
- Interagency collaboration can occur at a number of different operational levels.



- The ultimate indicators of successful collaboration are how well each level operates and how well different levels relate to each other.



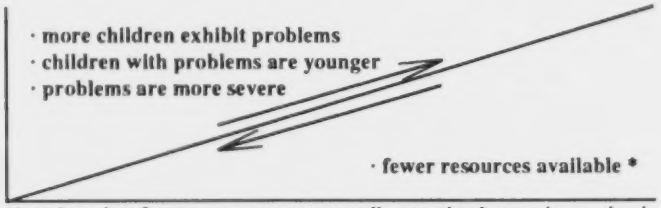
- Successful interagency collaboration also requires well developed communication.



- Many of the concepts and approaches described for interagency collaboration apply equally well to the development of good links between programs in a given agency (intra-agency collaboration).

WHY SHOULD SCHOOLS PROMOTE COLLABORATION?

In schools, we are all well aware of the changing nature of the student population. Simply illustrated, the situation looks something like this:


· more children exhibit problems
· children with problems are younger
· problems are more severe
· fewer resources available *

(* At least insofar as resources are generally perceived as not increasing in proportion to needs or in pace with inflationary factors.)

The problems young people face also affect their ability to be successful at school. While there is no question that the needs of many young people go far beyond the traditional mandate of the school, some students make extensive demands and their needs often require disproportionate amounts of teacher and administrator time. The community is also placing increased demands on schools to deal with a variety of problems.

Surely, we think, these problems must fall within someone else's mandate and area of expertise. However, before we look at who else is responsible, perhaps we, as educators, should reflect on our own mandate. The mission of Alberta Education and the Alberta school system is to ensure that all of our children and young people receive the best possible education.

Alberta Education recognizes that the "achievement of the broader goals of education must be viewed as a shared responsibility of the community. Maximum learning occurs when the efforts and expectations of various agencies affecting children complement each other . . . (We must) recognize the learning that has or has not occurred through various community influences, among which the home is most important . . . " ("Goals of Education," *Alberta Education Policy Manual,* 1990).

If factors at home and in the community are highly significant to a student's responsiveness at school, it makes good sense that we work closely with those groups. School is part of the child's "natural" environment. It is the place where children, in the normal scheme of life, spend five days a week for over five hours a day.

Where Do We Begin?

Early intervention strategies are most effective in meeting the special needs of children. Therefore, special attention should be given to the following:

1. **identification and assessment of students' problems at the onset of the difficulty**

2. **development of an action plan at the school level that ensures that we accommodate and adapt to the needs of the individual student**

3. **enlisting the support and assistance of other groups in developing, implementing and evaluating the plan.**

The early identification of problems is essential to ensuring proactive versus reactive service provision. The sooner a problem is recognized and dealt with, the better the chances for individual change and growth. From an organizational perspective, prevention and secondary intervention are much more cost-effective than reactive programming. For example, compare the cost of outpatient, group or individual counselling with the cost of residential treatment.

Once the school has identified the needs of the students, it can develop an action plan that reflects those needs and makes the best use of school and community resources.

Creating partnerships with other community groups is based on the fundamental belief that no one agency or individual can do it alone. It must be recognized that each organization has a unique and necessary contribution to make to the development of academically successful, motivated, healthy and well adjusted children. Different though our activities may be, institutions and families share a common concern for the productive development of children. To stand alone leaves us inadequately prepared for the challenges before us. It has been said that schools as social institutions have become "outmoded" because the institutions on which they depend, namely the family and the workplace, have changed dramatically. As a community, we must find ways to accommodate those dramatic changes and to make school a more effective institution.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Interagency collaboration obviously takes a great deal of time and energy. One can be left wondering, "Is it worth the effort? Things are going fairly well after all so why rock the boat? Perhaps interagency co-operation isn't really necessary." Some of the benefits are:

- improved accessibility of service,
- reduced fragmentation and duplication,
- increased staff effectiveness,
- improved organizational efficiency, and
- improved public image.

Improved Accessibility of Service

School is sometimes the place where children's problems emerge and are first identified. Our challenge is to connect the people who need help with the helpers. But access to services means more than simply making referrals. There may be roadblocks — psychological as well as physical — that prevent people from acting on referrals and getting the help they need. Services often operate out of offices and community agencies to which some stigma may be attached. For example, "That's the place where alcoholics go" or "There's the child abuse office." For those who see beyond the stigma, a second roadblock may be the unknown. That is, unknown people in unknown agencies who may or may not be able to help. Physical barriers may be as simple as lack of easy access through public transportation. Agencies that are not open evenings or weekends or do not supply day care or who charge a fee can further alienate potential clients. Without question, the more schools can do to bridge the gap between the people who need the help and those who provide it, the greater the chances of success.

The more closely schools and helping agencies work together, the greater are students' chances of accessing needed services in a timely and positive fashion. Sometimes, providing services at the school site can improve accessibility. Other times, simply being aware of the roadblocks can help schools and agencies enhance accessibility through discussion and negotiation.

Reduced Fragmentation and Duplication

Clients with multiple needs are frequently on their own in learning about and wading through the bureaucracies of each agency who may be able to help them. Often, when clients are using more than one resource, service providers are unaware of the various case plans and consequently tend to duplicate service. The end result for clients can be that they are treated as a collection of unrelated problems rather than as a whole person or as part of a family unit.

Several recent reports highlight the concern that the existing network of services is weak and that service delivery to children and youth is fragmented, unco-ordinated and lacking in co-operation between agencies and professionals. One group of authors termed this the "F.D.A. Syndrome versus the C.C.C. Solution." That is, fragmentation, duplication and abdication as opposed to co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination.

Increased Staff Effectiveness

Interagency co-ordination can open up a vast new complement of resources to the innovative administrator. New staff skills, new knowledge, new ideas, new equipment and facilities as well as new services are all possibilities. Perhaps the greatest advantage for staff who work collaboratively is shared ownership and responsibility for service delivery, which creates a sense of teamwork and community spirit.

Improved Organizational Efficiency

Interagency co-ordination can help agencies deliver more service for the same money, or the same services for less money. This is accomplished through enhanced staff effectiveness, improved accessibility of service and reduced fragmentation and duplication. Frequently, interagency co-operation also leads to more proactive service delivery.

Improved Public Relations

Administrators who cut through bureaucratic red tape for the benefit of their clients and who take responsibility for effectively spending public funds, also improve the public image of their agencies. Typically, there is strong public support for interagency co-operation because it makes sense. We all need to be involved in solutions to society's problems. When agencies consult with each other, with parents and community groups, the public supports these efforts because they are involved. When the community is involved, support for teachers, schools and agencies is strengthened.

WHAT ARE THE FACTORS TO CONSIDER?

When planning a co-operative venture, each agency must consider several factors:

- policies
- organizational climate
- people
- available resources, and
- process.

These factors are powerful influences by themselves. In combination they sometimes create resistance to change. Such obstacles can prevent the development of an interagency perspective and eliminate any possibility for delivering joint programs. But none of these barriers is impenetrable. The interagency process requires, however, that we be aware of potential obstacles in order to plan a route around them.

Policies

The governing principles and intrinsic values that inform our policies have a profound impact on the ability and desire of program planners to work collaboratively.

Policies are those governing principles established within and among agencies. These include mandates and laws such as the **School Act**, the **Child Welfare Act** and the **Young Offenders Act**. They also include regulations and procedures set out in policy manuals, as well as guidelines, protocols, certification requirements and interagency agreements.

Policies range from those that are restrictive or vague with respect to interagency collaboration to those that promote collaboration. Some agencies may even have a policy that sets out a mechanism for interagency dialogue and planning.

The bureaucratic profile of a school or agency may be characterized by the total effect its policies have on interagency collaboration. At worst, these policies may be sparse and conflicting; at best, they are sufficient and complementary. Most schools, school boards and agencies operate somewhere between those extremes. For example, a school board may have complementary and compatible procedures and guidelines established with the child welfare system, but not with other agencies.

Organizational Climate

The atmosphere in which collaboration is attempted has a significant influence on its success or failure. Many factors contribute to the predominant organizational climate. Some of these are:

- attitudes
- support
- priority
- timing, and
- organizational stability.

The **attitudes** of the organization and of the individuals who work in it reflect the value they place on interagency collaboration. For example, a school board can state publicly that it values interagency initiatives, but individual decision makers and planners may not privately share this belief. Conversely, individuals within organizations may be keen and committed to the concept, but the system at large may not reinforce or encourage their attitudes. Naturally, it is difficult to separate personal interest from organizational and public interest, as people don't always share their opinions if they realize their attitudes differ from those of the organization. Individual and organizational attitudes all contribute to the degree of co-operation with or resistance to interagency collaboration.

Support of key decision-makers, middle management and direct service providers can enhance interagency co-operation. Lack of support can render it almost impossible. Generally speaking, the more opportunities staff at each operational level have for input into the initiative, the greater their feeling of ownership and subsequent support.

The **priority** that an organization places on interagency collaboration will affect the amount of time, energy and resources allocated. Priorities reflect the attitudes of the organization and the individuals involved. These attitudes are often established through policies and organizational "visions."

Timing is related to priorities. However, as interagency collaboration involves at least two different systems, it is important that their priorities be somewhat similar. For example, if a school board has decided that collaboration with the community is a priority and establishes contact with an appropriate partner, they may or may not be receptive. Although their reluctance to participate may be due to many factors, it may also be largely a question of poor timing. By doing the necessary homework before making contact, it is possible to gently apply some external pressure and thereby persuade the agency to consider the potential advantages to collaboration.

Organizational stability refers to the current operational mode of the agency. For example, a state of "crisis operation," that is, shrinking

budgets, increased needs and community pressure, will generally lead to one of two responses. Either change is resisted, because all energy is put into keeping the organization afloat, or change is welcomed as a solution to the crisis. Likewise, in a stable organization, the tendency might be to resist change and maintain the status quo, or to welcome interagency collaboration as a vehicle for improving service delivery.

All of these factors; attitude, support, priority, timing, and organizational stability, determine the organizational climate. To explore your school or agency's organizational and individual attitudes, refer to the questionnaire "What Are Your Attitudes Toward Interagency Collaboration?" (see Appendix).

People

The ability of the interagency group to accomplish its goals and achieve its mission depends on the people involved in the initiative. There is no other single variable as important to interagency success as the individuals and personalities involved. There are three primary groups of people who affect the outcome: the **facilitators,** the **group members** and the **key decision-makers**.

The **facilitators** are those individuals who provide guidance throughout the collaborative process. Therefore, facilitators must be adept at dealing with other agencies. Ideally, the task of facilitator should be part of someone's job description. The task should fall to someone within the organization who has access to key decision-makers as well as frontline service providers and who has a good understanding of process and people skills. Without an active facilitator, interagency initiatives are likely to be somewhat haphazard in nature. A facilitator can ensure that equal emphasis is placed on design, implementation, maintenance and evaluation.

The **group members** are those primarily involved in the planning and developmental aspects of the process. Since strong support and involvement of staff at all organizational levels is critical to the outcome, this group can play a major role in influencing others to accept the plan and in eradicating obstacles.

Key decision-makers also contribute to the acceptance or rejection of interagency initiatives by establishing the broader philosophical base. Their endorsement establishes the priority position and is often the impetus for continued growth of partnership initiatives.

None of these groups of people is inherently knowledgeable about interagency collaboration. Time and energy must be spent educating and actively involving personnel in all aspects of the process.

Available Resources

The availability and nature of assets has a profound influence on interagency efforts. At least three factors contribute to the level of resources available to support such endeavors: money, people and facilities. Interagency co-operation is not a solution to insufficient funding, but it is a way of maximizing service delivery while minimizing costs.

There are some obvious restrictions in resource allocation due to limited budgets and escalating needs. However, the resources designated for interagency initiatives will largely depend on the climate and the people involved. It is generally agreed that just heaping resources on a problem does not solve it. We have to understand the underlying needs and how the applied intervention will address those needs relative to our overall mandate.

Discussion of agency resources is frequently limited to physical facilities and financing. But resources can be any commodities or means that permit an organization to accomplish its objectives. While money and physical facilities may be essential, they are certainly not sufficient in and of themselves. Other resources more ephemeral and elusive than money or facilities are just as essential to organizational survival and optimal service provision. Some of these include political influence, social standing and prestige, charisma, popularity and esteem, legitimacy and legality as well as personal and organizational energy. Discussion concerning resources from an interagency perspective must also address differences with respect to planning cycles and fiscal years as well as varying geographical boundaries for service provision.

Process

The sequence of actions undertaken by the interagency group has a critical impact on the success of the collaborative effort. Actions taken by the group can either foster co-operation or promote competition and dissension. Some of the key aspects of good process include: communication patterns that are well developed both internally and externally, appropriate planning and review procedures, a mechanism for conflict resolution and strong leadership throughout the process. This process will be discussed in greater detail as we identify the steps to interagency planning and co-ordination in Part III of this manual.

Some research has concluded the primary reason that interagency collaboration does not occur is because there are few models that clearly delineate the critical steps needed to carry it out. Deficiencies in interagency collaboration result not only from inadequate understanding about the functioning of other agencies (for example their goals, policies, eligibility criteria), but also from limited understanding of the skills necessary to successfully manage transitional planning.

PART II

TYPES OF INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

There are numerous ways to effectively link service providers, programs and organizations; the most common types are listed below. In the following pages, each method is described in some detail and a rationale is given for school involvement. Although the order of the list reflects, to some degree, increasing organizational complexity, it does not suggest increasing importance. In fact, it is unlikely that collaboration using the latter concepts will be initiated until a solid foundation has been established. These generally require an established relationship and at least some history of interagency co-ordination. The kind of interagency initiative undertaken will depend largely on needs and goals identified. These action plans will vary widely depending on the unique needs and characteristics of the community.

The most effective interagency collaboration combines a number of these methods to reflect the spirit and imaginations of those involved.

- **Referral and Follow-up**
- **Information Sharing and Networking**
- **Case Consultation**
- **Client Teams**
- **Shared Location**
- **Staff Loan**
- **Joint Training**
- **Purchase of Service Contracts**
- **Joint Policies and Procedures**
- **Joint Intake and Assessment**
- **Materials Exchange**
- **Joint Planning**
- **Joint Project Design, Operation and Evaluation**
- **Joint Funding**

REFERRAL AND FOLLOW-UP

Referral is the initiative that directs clients from one agency to another for service. This is also where interagency collaboration either begins or fails to begin. School staff are often called upon to make referrals to unknown people in unknown agencies with little information about who, when and how to do this appropriately. This is particularly true in large centres where staff receiving the referral information are too numerous to know personally or when dealing with agencies steeped in legislation, such as the child welfare system.

The key to success in timely and supportive referral and follow-up procedures lies in agency and school staff knowing as much as possible about each other. General orientation to community resources for new teaching and counselling staff and a list of neighbourhood agencies are helpful but insufficient.

Here are some simple ways to promote comprehensive referral and follow-up communication. These strategies are most effective used together to improve overall awareness of community resources and to build interagency relationships. They are particularly helpful for "key" staff from agencies that make referrals and agencies that provide services.

- **Agency/school brochures** can be used to keep track of the service capabilities of other agencies as well as supplying some general information about organizational structure and client population.

- **Multi-agency directories** are common in large urban centres and are often maintained by an organization with a networking mandate. Where none exists, school boards can undertake the task of maintaining their own database on local resources for children and families. It is important to keep this information current and readily accessible to school staff. A directory may sound time consuming and cumbersome but much of the labour can be supplied by parents or other community volunteers.

- **Resource fairs** can be held to bring the primary agencies providing services to students and families in the community together. Each agency is given an opportunity to describe its services and overall operation. Presentations might be based on a theme, for example, drug and alcohol abuse programs. An area should be set aside for staff to mingle and get to know one another while exchanging resource information. The resource fair might be held annually or biennially.

- **"Help" posters and pocket cards**, produced annually, can be an effective way to provide basic information to both professionals and clients. Posters entitled "How to Get Counselling Assistance" or "How to Get Financial Assistance" displayed in an area highly visible to students, families and professionals provide a telephone number and a place to start. Students may prefer wallet-sized cards to keep throughout the year. For example, a student wishing birth control information but embarrassed to ask a teacher or counsellor can use a card or poster to locate a suitable resource.

- **Networking and information sharing opportunities** are essential for staff in building interagency relationships. Human service providers and agencies are concerned with respecting client confidentiality and it is only through enhanced professional trust and dialogue that these issues can be addressed. Further information on networking is provided in a subsequent section.

- **Agency/school visits, regular meetings and interagency staff workshops** can also serve to initiate and maintain a smoothly functioning referral network. The frequency and nature of such visits and meetings will vary depending on staff needs and the amount of change or reorganization that is occurring. It is particularly important that these exchanges occur at a number of different organizational levels. While it is necessary that front-line teachers, counsellors and agency workers have positive relationships and established mechanisms to exchange information, it is equally important that principals, superintendents and trustees be involved in this process. For more complex and integrated interagency initiatives to occur, senior management must:

  - understand the other agency's service delivery system
  - develop trusting professional relationships
  - exchange information on needs as well as planning and review processes.

INFORMATION SHARING AND NETWORKING

Networks are diverse groups of individuals who are flexibly linked together by a shared focus and a desire to exchange information and pool resources. The shared focus can be a common geographical area (e.g., service providers in an inner-city neighbourhood or rural community) or a common interest group (e.g., those agencies involved with the juvenile criminal justice system). Networks emphasize the linking of individuals more than agencies and are primarily focused on establishing and maintaining good communication rather than on a final product.

Some networks function primarily to exchange information, ideas and resources, to match needs with resources, fill gaps and provide mutual support. Some networks generate data on client and community needs and initiate shared projects to meet these demands. Some networks function to enhance the personal and professional growth of members. Others develop in response to a need for an altered public policy; their role is to bring interested stakeholders together to lobby and advocate for change. Still other networks provide a support system for individuals with common problems. These are generally referred to as self-help networks. Many networks combine two or more of these functions or focus on more than one issue.

There are hundreds of such information sharing groups throughout Alberta and most school jurisdictions are involved with networking initiatives within their community. Networking and information sharing groups are low-risk in nature and do not pose a significant drain on monetary or human resources.

School board personnel can play a vital role in regularly meeting with community interest groups. The advantages are many. Networking and information sharing can assist schools in:

- identifying existing and emerging student and family needs
- enhancing awareness of community programs and services
- identifying gaps in existing services
- promoting a teamwork approach to deal with students and their families, and
- sharing an educational perspective with other service providers.

CASE CONSULTATION

Case consultation involves staff at one agency asking advice from staff at another agency about particular students. The questions may pertain to whether the student is eligible for certain services, what services a student/family is receiving, or which of their programs is most appropriate for the student. No matter what the question is, the purpose is to pool professional knowledge about the case and to enhance co-ordination of the services being provided. This type of interagency collaboration seems so straight forward it hardly seems worth mentioning. For something that should be as easy as picking up the phone, (assuming you know whom to call) what could go wrong? Sometimes staff are reluctant to call an unknown person in an unknown agency for fear of seeming ill-informed. Some agencies encourage consultation more than others and confusion about the rules of confidentiality can easily become barriers. In addition, professionals do not always lend themselves to information sharing and resource pooling or acknowledge a mutual need for other professional disciplines.

Informal consultation often develops as staff build professional relationships that arise from their referral and networking activities. If this does not occur, it may be necessary to identify existing barriers and then develop strategies to resolve any outstanding issues.

Staff from two or more agencies may also meet on a more formal basis to discuss cases. For example, one school board was able to arrange for a child psychologist from Alberta Mental Health to meet every second week with designated school staff at a junior high school. These sessions were designed to:

- discuss the appropriateness of some children and families for treatment with that agency
- assist school staff in the earlier identification of needy students
- discuss various school-based strategies for effective management and support of young people manifesting behavioural problems, and
- promote a teamwork approach to dealing with mutual clients and general mental health issues.

In some cases, more than two agencies are providing services to the same family or child. Case consultation can help delineate responsibilities and tasks, establish roles and communication processes. Often children and families are receiving help from a number of different agencies who don't always co-ordinate their efforts and activities. Sometimes, quite inadvertently, these efforts are not mutually supportive or compatible, which can lead to fragmentation or duplication of service for the client.

CLIENT TEAMS

Client teams go a step beyond case consultations. A client team is made up of staff from two or more agencies who routinely co-ordinate their activities to meet the needs of a number of mutual clients. This is generally done through established mechanisms for continuous and systematic interaction. Client teams are often formed for clients who will be needing service over an extended period of time or who have many severe needs. Agencies can use client teams to make the intake process more effective (for example, where clients or groups of clients initially meet with a team rather than having to "agency shop" until an appropriate fit is found) and to reduce fragmentation and duplication of service. Another advantage is that the client is always dealing with the same team and can therefore assume that these people are already familiar with his or her situation. Client teams usually interact on a regular basis. Another advantage to client teams is that the different perspectives offered (professional orientations, individual orientations and agency orientations) can create a wider range of planning options.

An example of professionals with different perspectives is illustrated by the case of eight-year-old John. The school counsellor assessed John as a youngster with behavioural problems that blocked his learning potential. The teacher saw John as an unhappy child who was rejected by his classmates and who didn't complete his school work. The community social worker described John as an emotionally disturbed child living in a single parent family with no support system. The mother, when asked, viewed her son as a violent boy "who is just like his dad." A client-focused team would take into account all perspectives and develop a balanced and cohesive plan with shared long- and short-term goals. Tasks and responsibilities would be assigned depending on areas of expertise and the nature of the relationship between helper and client. In this situation, the shared goals included reducing John's destructive behaviour, increasing his social skills and supporting John's mother in her single parent role.

Some schools are fortunate enough to have such teams in place. However, even when this is the case, students are often involved with outside helpers who need to be included on already established teams. One school was able to combine their existing school-based team (made up of two school counsellors, a school social worker and a community school co-ordinator) with external resources (an Alberta Mental Health therapist and a community social worker) to form a comprehensive client-focused team.

SHARED LOCATION

The obvious advantage to sharing a location is that it can substantially reduce the problems clients have accessing services. The close proximity of the agencies also makes closer staff interaction possible. This arrangement encourages cross-referrals and the development of integrated service delivery procedures. Beyond the initial selection of a site or negotiation with a newcomer with respect to space, this approach may not require any additional interagency planning or co-ordination of services.

This concept has worked effectively in schools across the country who have mental health offices, health clinics, or leisure centres included as part of their facility. Newly developed community centres are beginning to include police, social services and service club satellite branches within the building in an attempt to bring these resources closer to the consumer. Some recreational centres have also broadened their outlook to encompass both physical and mental wellness. Accordingly, new centres often include many recreational facilities (swimming pool, gym, ice rink, roller rink, libraries, dance and martial arts studios) as well as social services centres and medi-clinics. This method of collaboration fits well with our earlier discussion of the school as an extension of the child's natural environment.

Arguments against sharing a location are apt to be, "We can't afford to move" or "We need all the staff we've got at our main office just to meet daily client demands" or "All of our staff need to be in close contact with one another." While these are legitimate concerns, it should be emphasized that in some cases more clients can be served with the same allotment of available resources. Also, it is not necessary for the whole agency to relocate; one or two workers can pilot the concept. Telephone contact and regular meetings can keep agency staff connected even when their work locations differ. The drain on other offices may also be decreased if clients who would normally go to these locations for service are drawn to a centre strategically situated in a high volume area.

Because staff will be using another agency's facilities, good co-ordination is critical. Written agreements, contracts, or a memorandum of understanding are important to clarify the responsibilities of each party. Staff should understand that services are to be provided by each agency in accordance with their primary mandate. Supervisory responsibilities and administrative functions should be addressed before beginning the project and reviewed at regular intervals.

In selecting staff to be sent to work in other agencies, consider carefully their ability to get along with co-workers, to adjust to changes in their work environment and to maintain a positive attitude when faced with new

challenges. Set aside time to thoroughly familiarize the staff with the personnel and work routines of the other agency. Joint inservicing activities may be a good way of getting staff from both agencies actively involved and "onside" from the beginning.

Many school boards throughout the province have unique and exciting examples of shared activities within their jurisdiction. For example, local police departments have been placing "school resource officers" or "youth liaison officers" in designated schools for several years. These officers typically play a number of different roles ranging from traditional law enforcement activities to more proactive policing functions. Often, public health nurses have been members of school staff for many years, although their particular role and the time allotted varies significantly in each community.

In some jurisdictions, teaching staff are sent by the school board to work in a variety of institutional settings, such as hospitals, young offender facilities, and residential or day-treatment centres. The rationale for this is clear; if these young people need alternative living arrangements, they often require specialized educational settings as well, which school boards are obligated to provide. The concept may work just as effectively, however, in situations where obligations are less obvious but the need to deliver service in a creative fashion is quite clear.

One municipal department placed a full-time social worker in a local junior high school as part of a three-year project. A school board united with their regional child welfare department to deliver a "behaviour adaptation and treatment project" in designated elementary schools. The school board supplies teachers, social services contracts with a local agency for family counsellors, and the costs are shared for youth workers who function as specialized classroom aides.

STAFF LOAN

Staff loans result in staff from one agency working under the direct supervision of another agency. Tasks are assigned by that agency for a specified period of time. These loans are sometimes responses to one agency's call for additional staff assistance as a result of sudden budget cuts or a rapid influx of clients. Staff loans may also be used to increase the experience and skill level of staff by exposing them to a new work environment. In any case, staff benefit from a better understanding of the other agency and the agencies find ways to work more closely together.

Funding varies for each staff loan arrangement. Sometimes the employer deems it desirable for designated staff to gain additional experience available through time spent with another agency. A school board may feel it would be advantageous for a guidance or social work consultant to work with Child Welfare, AADAC, or Alberta Mental Health to learn more about how that agency operates as well as to gain a different clinical perspective. This new knowledge can then be shared with other school board personnel as part of an inservice. In other situations school board staff may be seconded to work for an outside agency to provide an educational perspective in working with and planning for needy children. In those instances the employee's salary would most likely be assumed by the seconding agency.

Whether staff loans are used to enhance interagency co-ordination, to bolster another agency's resources temporarily, or to promote staff development, these arrangements are best entered into with a clear understanding of what each agency expects from the other. It is essential to prepare a written statement of what all participating agencies will provide and expect from the staff loan arrangement.

JOINT TRAINING

Sometimes staff members who represent different services can acquire and practise new skills together. Students today present complex needs for educators, mental health workers, service agencies and communities alike. Teachers and other helpers are required to deal with numerous issues that extend far beyond their professional training and individual repertoire of skills. The information age is particularly overwhelming to educators who must not only keep abreast with the latest technological and societal changes but must also find effective methods of instruction to meet the needs of all students. It makes sense to work in conjunction with those in the community who share a similar need and desire for the development of specific knowledge and skills. By identifying community agencies who are also interested in the social and emotional functioning of young people and their families, we may find willing partners for joint training endeavors. There are numerous advantages to collaborating with other agencies in the area of professional development. Some of these include:

- costs can be shared, allowing more choice with respect to guest speakers and resource materials;
- the learning process is enhanced for participants through the exchange of ideas and concepts that transcend professional and agency orientations and disciplines;
- as a byproduct, participants learn more about each other's work world, which can lead to the development of other interagency initiatives; and most importantly,
- personal and professional relationships, which are the basis of all successful partnerships, are fostered.

PURCHASE OF SERVICE CONTRACTS

Sometimes agencies enter into formal agreements with other agencies, individuals or government departments to obtain services. Some school boards in the country have contractual agreements with psychiatrists or child psychologists who assess and offer recommendations to school personnel and parents. Other schools boards have long-standing contracts with community agencies, or even other school boards for the provision of specialized psycho-social services for identified students.

There are a number of advantages as well as drawbacks to contracting services versus direct employment. On the positive side, only the amount of service required to meet changing needs is purchased, which may be more cost-efficient than employing more staff. One important consideration, however, concerns agency mandates and professional standards. When an individual accepts employment with a given agency, presumably he or she also accepts the philosophy and orientation of the employer. This may not hold true for contract personnel. In addition, procedures pertaining to confidentiality and release of information among staff often varies for internal (employee to employee) versus external (employee to contractor) communication.

Regardless of the decision as to how to deliver the service, consider carefully the needs of the client and the organization. It is important that all interagency initiatives fit into the existing structure of the organizations involved.

JOINT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Joint policies and procedures take into account each agency's mandate and establish guidelines for interaction. The guidelines may pertain to the role of various personnel, the referral procedures, a description of services offered, a client eligibility schedule, agency mandates and governing legislation, procedures for conflict resolution, etc. Joint policies and procedures are often referred to as **protocols**, for example, the **Protocol and Guidelines for Child Welfare Workers and School Personnel** on child abuse. Protocols need to be jointly developed by all agencies involved and address areas that may lead to confusion or conflict. It is also important that senior administrators endorse the development of such documents and designate staff who represent different aspects of the organization to be on the working committee. Agencies and school boards who have developed protocols stress that a joint inservice component should accompany the completed document. Inservice allows staff to better understand the procedures, to integrate the material through discussion and to build professional relationships.

School boards and staff find joint policies and procedures particularly useful when the services provided by a given agency are multi-faceted in nature. For example, most Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) offices throughout the province provide counselling services apart from community education services. The referral process is enhanced when staff are familiar with the different kinds of services available and how to access them appropriately. Schools may also find protocols useful when dealing with agencies and government departments governed by complex legislation, such as Alberta Family and Social Services or the Solicitor General. A great deal of confusion and subsequent conflict can occur when an agency's mandate is not clearly understood. When policies and procedures are clearly understood, referrals are timely and appropriate, and clients benefit.

There are numerous examples of protocols between school boards and Alberta Family and Social Services throughout the province. Some are more descriptive in nature and include sections on indicators of child abuse and neglect, on roles of various personnel as well as significant quotations from the **Child Welfare Act**. Others incorporate a descriptive focus with a more prescriptive orientation and include sections on appeal procedures, conflict resolution, etc. At least one school board has similar protocols with their local AADAC office and are in the process of developing joint policies and procedures with probation workers. In some provinces, the Ministers involved with children and families have collaborated to develop protocols and guidelines from a provincial perspective. Such protocols provide a focus and an impetus for individual jurisdictions to design their own, less generic procedures.

JOINT INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

Joint intake and assessment occurs when agencies use a common system for screening clients and diagnosing their needs. A centralized intake point for initial screening and referral can free the client from repeatedly answering similar questions posed in different ways and appearing on different forms. This approach works best for agencies with a history of collaboration. If this is not the case, or collaboration is in the early stages of development, it may be appropriate to start with a common intake form. Each of the participating agencies would use the form when initially screening clients, ask their permission to release the information and then share the information with the other agencies the client has been advised to visit. This process can be particularly effective when there is more than one agency in a given area providing service for a common problem, for example drug and alcohol abuse treatment. The subtle differences between programs with respect to philosophy, approach and program design can be confusing to potential clients who often get bogged down just trying to locate a suitable resource.

Common intake and assessment procedures are also helpful when dealing with those clients who are in and out of residential or institutional settings or are dealing with a multitude of service providers and agencies over an extended period of time. By the time the records are located and interpreted, much time can be lost and in the interim there is a tendency to deal with matters previously covered.

The primary objection to joint intake and assessment is that agencies generally require data be collected on their own form and, of course, expect it to be treated confidentially. These objections are well justified, and procedures for uniform data collection can create controversy. The best approach is to proceed slowly and identify all the obstacles to achieving the anticipated outcome. Through careful and thorough discussion, perhaps certain regulations can be waived for the purpose of piloting the idea, providing respect for clients' rights is maintained. Some information can be shared among certain agencies through modification of regulations while other agencies will need to use their own forms and recording practices.

MATERIALS EXCHANGE

Materials exchange is a mechanism for sharing equipment, products and materials among staff and agencies. This is often overlooked as an area for possible collaboration because it is so straightforward. We also tend to take for granted our areas of greatest wealth and abundance and assume others have the same comforts. In many cases one agency's riches are another's most pressing need. For example, school boards tend to have exceptional facilities and certain kinds of recreational and industrial arts equipment. Perhaps a local agency or community group would be interested in providing an after-school group for selected youngsters if they had an appropriate facility. Or, an unused classroom, spare office or empty desk could become another agency's staff quarters. The Alberta Education policy on community schools encourages schools to open their facilities for community use. Some schools and community facilities are adapted for community education purposes. Remember to take stock of not only what you need but also what you could offer in return. The checklist entitled "What You Can Gain and Provide Through Interagency Collaboration" (see Appendix) may be helpful in exposing some of your buried treasures.

JOINT PLANNING

Joint planning generally occurs after there is a previously established relationship and at least some history of interagency co-ordination. When agencies are working together it is important that regular planning and review meetings occur, to ensure that interagency endeavours operate smoothly and continue to meet the need they were designed for. The joint planning process is discussed in greater detail in Part III of this manual.

JOINT PROGRAM DESIGN, OPERATION AND EVALUATION

Joint program design, operation and evaluation goes a step beyond planning and involves the implementation of joint solutions to defined problems in relation to available resources. This approach is often the end result of many of the interagency activities previously described. The process model, "Steps to Interagency Collaboration" (Part III) further elaborates on the formation of goals and objectives, development of an implementation plan and the ongoing need for evaluation from a multidimensional perspective.

To be effective in designing programs and evaluating outcomes, personnel need to be appointed to this task, just as they would to any other job-related responsibility. The joint committee that assumes a lead role needs to maintain both a short- and long-term perspective relative to client and organizational needs. In addition, the committee should maintain solid lines of communication at many organizational levels in order to fully understand the emerging needs and incorporate these into the initiative. Generally this involves data collection throughout the project as well as dissemination of information through a mutually agreed upon procedure. Sometimes part of the interagency agreement involves the shared funding of a project co-ordinator who assumes primary responsibility for the provision of service. This can provide the agencies with a consolidated and centralized mechanism for planning and project review. This can also be accomplished, however, through a steering committee format with representation from all stakeholder groups. Regardless of the method selected, it is important that the process meet the needs of the client group as well as the participating agencies.

JOINT FUNDING

Joint funding occurs when two or more agencies share the operating costs of a mutual project. To varying degrees, joint funding can be needed for any form of interagency collaboration. Unlike shared program management responsibilities, which may be approached using a variety of interagency strategies, joint budgeting procedures will often be dictated by the types of funding sources that are tapped. If a grant is received from a government department or a private foundation, it may be necessary for one agency to serve as the primary fiscal agent, although all agencies may be involved in decisions affecting resource allocation. When funds are received in piecemeal fashion with each agency supporting its own program segment, integrated budgeting may be limited to joint decision making regarding the allocation of resources. Often the most creative approach to sharing budgetary responsibilities rests with the administration of program resources that are generated locally, for example, in-kind contributions, volunteer support and private donations. Because these resources belong to the program, interagency approaches to budget administration, cost accounting and projections for further resource needs are easier to facilitate. When funds for the program become a shared responsibility, standardized forms and uniform record-keeping procedures for monitoring program resources can be implemented. It is helpful if the accounting departments of all contributing agencies are involved in discussions concerning the integrated program at an early point. Fiscal responsibilities for each contributing agency should be clearly stated in writing, including a specific time frame and review date.

PART III

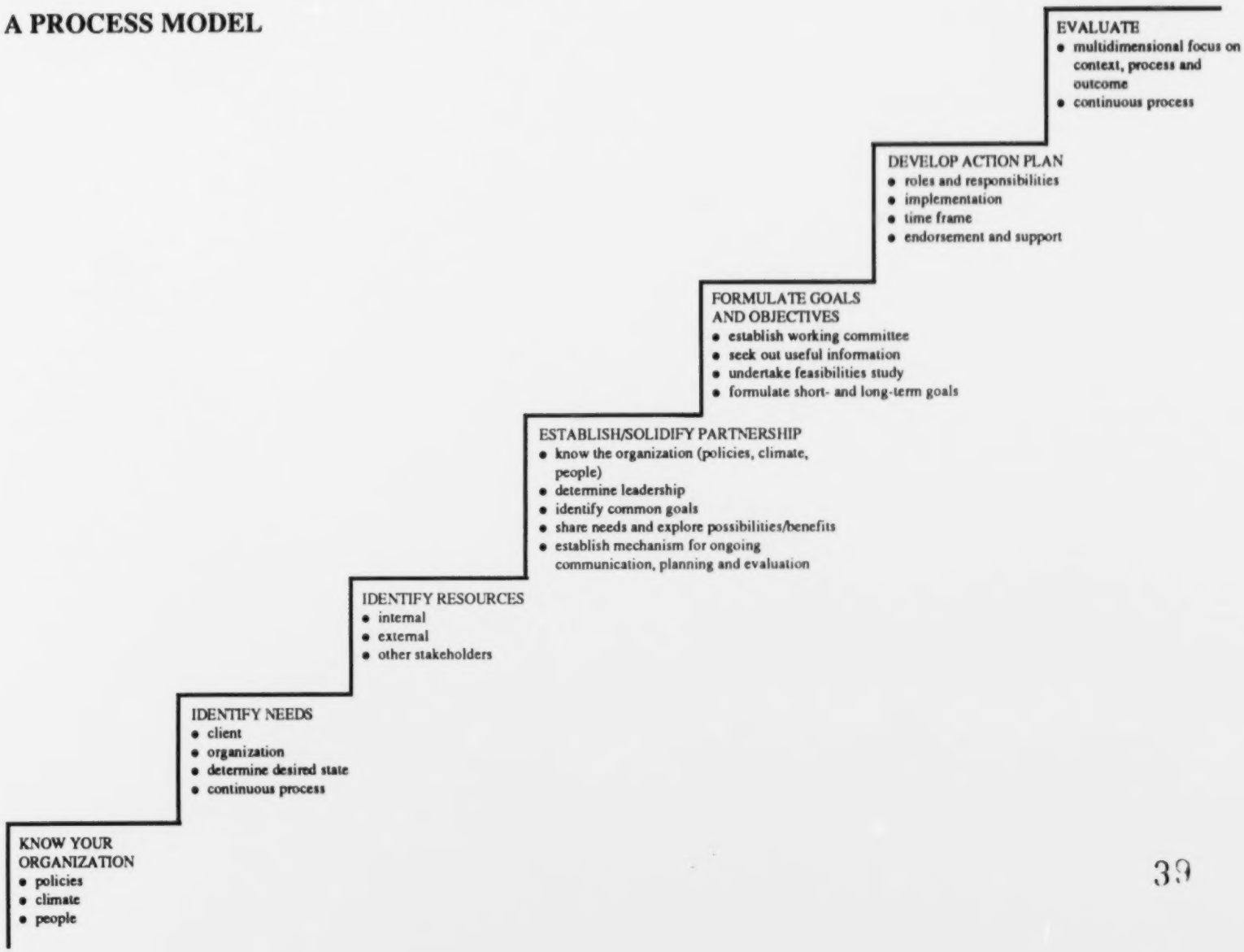
STEPS TO INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

The model on the next page identifies the primary components to be addressed when planning interagency collaboration. This model is more descriptive than prescriptive. It outlines some of the considerations necessary for successful interagency collaboration. The model can be applied at all levels of interagency collaboration: individual, agency, regional and ministerial.

Although the process is illustrated as a series of steps, it is not linear. Over time, collaborating agencies will move back and forth through all the planning dimensions. Good interagency collaboration can require years of adjustment and fine-tuning.

The manner in which organizations implement the various planning stages will vary depending on the nature and scope of the collaborative initiative, their previous experience with interagency projects, as well as their current relationship with a given agency.

A PROCESS MODEL



KNOW YOUR ORGANIZATION

Knowing your own agency or school system is the first step toward interagency collaboration, yet it is often overlooked. A good place to start is to examine one or more of your agency's programs that deal with a specific population. A program is made up of activities, services, resources, people and management, all of which evolve over time. Agency staff and others often become committed to existing programs and arrangements and may not be prepared to look at alternative service delivery arrangements. Organizations may have also accumulated obligations and commitments that constrain their behaviour. Over the years they have made promises to other service agencies, to particular groups of clients, students, parents and financial backers. The expectations of others may make it difficult for agencies to deviate from current operating procedures.

Spend some time looking at your organization from an evaluative frame of reference, focusing on potential internal obstacles. It is much easier to identify and critique external barriers than it is to assess one's own system. Specifically, appraise your agency, department or school's place on the developmental continuums for policies, climate and people as discussed in Part I.

IDENTIFY NEEDS

Information is power! An agency that makes good use of information sources, or that conducts its own data collection will be better able to:

- serve clients more thoroughly by referring them to appropriate support services
- make their activities more efficient by co-ordinating with other agencies
- tailor programs to changing needs in the community
- prepare annual reports that justify a high level of support, and
- apply for additional funding from various sources when the need is justified.

Mutual information gathering and exchange is the most fundamental kind of co-operation among agencies. Without information exchange, virtually no other kind of interagency linkage is possible. The information we exchange must be based on a solid understanding of our own organization, and of our potential clients' needs.

In identifying needs it is important to look at the situation from the perspective of both client and client group as well as from an organizational reference point. What are the particular needs and characteristics of this population? Is this a new problem or a chronic situation and are the numbers of people affected increasing or decreasing? How do we know it's a problem and how is it affecting the people involved?

With this information, the next step is to identify possible solutions, both short- and long-term. Keep in mind that a needs assessment is a continuous process that serves to refocus and redefine goals at regular intervals throughout program implementation.

IDENTIFY RESOURCES

This stage of planning is important for exploring how needs and resources fit together. A useful way to begin may be to focus on the extent to which services are available, accessible and sufficient. Sufficiency is sometimes measured in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

To begin, the kinds of questions to be asked might include:

- What's already in place?
- Are we using these resources to their fullest potential?

To answer these questions requires adequate knowledge of the identified population, the existing service delivery system (availability, accessibility, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability) as well as of internal management issues. Some key issues that can affect program delivery are productivity, interpersonal relationships, authority and accountability. When specific resource needs are identified, this knowledge can be a starting point for approaching another agency that can help meet those needs.

It is also important to do similar work before establishing contact with a perspective partner. The more each agency knows about the other's mandate, mission, service delivery system and organizational structure, the more likely they are to initiate appropriate connections. The questionnaire "What Do You Know About Other Agencies?" (see Appendix) can help determine what further homework is required.

ESTABLISH/ SOLIDIFY PARTNERSHIP

Few professionals have a comprehensive working knowledge of the policies, eligibility standards and services offered by other agencies. With a limited understanding of other agencies, there is a tendency for administrative personnel to evaluate everything from their own organizational perspective. This perspective often isolates agencies and limits the ability of administrators and practitioners to comprehend more fully the interrelatedness of public problems.

Part I discussed in general terms the benefits of interagency co-ordination. While all benefits revolve around improved service to clients, we also need to focus on the benefits to agencies, such as improved efficiency, expanded resources and increased effectiveness of agency staff and administrators. No two agencies are identical; each stands to benefit from interagency co-ordination in unique ways. To explore potential benefits, it may be helpful to have a guest speaker from another community describe their interagency project and the benefits that have resulted. The questionnaire "What You Can Gain and Provide Through Interagency Collaboration" (see Appendix), is designed to help agencies identify potential benefits and contributions they can make to a collaborative venture.

In establishing an interagency partnership, trade-offs are an important component. Collaboration requires give and take, in which one party agrees to modify its demands or its aspirations in response to those of another party. This process of exchange necessitates that all parties fundamentally agree to join forces because of the shared expectation and belief that collaboration will produce benefits that outweigh the costs incurred (or that it will at least outweigh the consequences of not collaborating!).

Determine Leadership

As previously discussed, the issue of leadership is highly significant throughout the planning process. Support, endorsement and involvement is required from key decision-makers, practitioners and the interagency planning group.

Initial contacts generally work best if they are between agency administrators. Sometimes, however, administrators are more comfortable in suggesting a meeting together with a small number of their staff who are closer to the identified needs and service delivery realities.

At these initial meetings it is important to share two kinds of information. The first is that which pertains to the nature and operation of the agency itself and second, that which is useful in the delivery of services.

By the end of these initial meetings, some common service delivery goals will no doubt have emerged. Understanding of the other agency's mandate, resources and limitations will be heightened, and shared needs and possibilities for collaboration identified. The final task is to establish a mechanism for ongoing communication and planning. This may be achieved through in-house reports circulated between agencies, regular meetings between key staff, or newsletters to keep agency staff current. Interagency task forces can also be formed to provide an established mechanism for the pursuit of co-ordination or to undertake a specific task, such as a joint community needs assessment. These task forces generally report back to the larger interagency steering group at regular intervals.

FORMULATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Once a partnership has been established, and common needs and goals identified, a joint working committee might undertake a feasibility study or complete a community needs assessment. These are tools for documenting the gaps between current conditions in a community and required or desired conditions. An important part of needs assessment is to seek out information on other programs and projects that may be similar in design and intent. Why duplicate efforts or reinvent the wheel if you can learn from someone else's experience?

Assessing the current status of the community helps agencies to clarify their goals and objectives. Goals are broad statements of intent and purpose that both energize and legitimate a process. Objectives are derived from goals. They spell out what is intended in specific, time-oriented and measurable terms. Objectives are important stops along the road to achieving a more general goal.

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

As the program design is translated into action, agency representatives must develop procedures to manage program activities, budgetary needs and technical assistance requirements. While a single agency can take the lead in dealing with these matters, using the other agency representatives as "program advisors," it is generally preferable for an integrated approach to be followed throughout the course of program development. Single agency management is not necessarily more efficient and may lead to waning interest in the program by the other agency.

The need for a formal agreement stating the nature and purpose of the initiative as well as the responsibilities of the respective parties varies in each situation. It can depend on the scope of the collaborative initiative and how many resources have been allocated. Sometimes the need for a formal agreement depends on the relationship between key administrators or on the general practice of the agencies involved. Generally, such agreements are called memoranda of agreement (MOA) or memoranda of understanding (MOU). There are advantages to such agreements, some of which are:

- they compel the agencies to define their objectives and roles
- they specify who is to take responsibility for managing and evaluating certain activities
- they do not have to be legally binding and therefore can be modified easily as changes take place, and
- they represent an initial symbol of goodwill and intended co-operation between the agencies involved.

Throughout the action planning process it is important that support and endorsement be readily available. Executive boards should be made aware of the initiative and relevant members of the community should also be informed. It is important that both the working committee and senior administrators be recognized for their courage and creativity in discovering new ways of delivering service.

EVALUATE

Like a needs assessment, evaluation is a continuous process that requires the involvement of both agencies. Hundreds of textbooks have been written that deal exclusively with the topic of evaluation and the intricacies of developing, implementing and interpreting evaluations. Some references on evaluation are provided in the bibliography (see pages 45, 46).

It is important to spend some time and energy discussing and planning for evaluation as part of the action planning phase. Some agencies have access to planners and researchers who could provide invaluable guidance in the evaluation process. If neither participating agency has internal personnel with evaluation expertise, it may be possible to involve an additional partner in the interagency endeavour. Sometimes city or municipal departments have a planning section or perhaps a local community college or university could lend some assistance. If none of these options are possible, an outside consultant should be hired to get the process started.

Keep in mind as well that a comprehensive evaluation of interagency collaboration requires a holistic perspective, that is, a multidimensional focus on **context, process and outcome**. It is important to look at current interagency activities, the results attributable to these activities and problems that may still exist related to service delivery. Most interagency collaboration efforts, by their very nature, do not yield immediate results. If the focus is simply on outcome rather than process, you will not be able to isolate specific developmental milestones or assess the interactional nature of the entire planning process.

APPENDICES

WHAT ARE YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

Circle the number that best represents your attitude. Then add your ratings for your score on co-operativeness.

1. 1_____2_____3_____4_____5

It took me a lot of time and effort to get things organized the way they are. Trying to co-ordinate could disrupt the organization I've achieved in my agency.

There is always room for improvement. Besides, I like new efforts to make things more effective and efficient.

2. 1_____2_____3_____4_____5

I know my staff and co-workers and know how to work with them. And I know they're good at what they do. I don't know any of these things about the other agency staff.

There are probably some very interesting and capable people in those other agencies who can teach me and and my co-workers some new things.

3. 1_____2_____3_____4_____5

I don't have money to pay for the things I'm already trying to do. How can I possibly afford a new project with an undetermined payoff?

There should be relatively little financial cost to co-ordination, and it may save me and my co-workers some time and even some money.

WHAT ARE YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION?

4. 1_____2_____3_____4_____5

How do I know what my superiors will think of such efforts? They may come down on me for not sticking to the agency's business.

Those higher up may like this approach, see it as showing initiative. There has been a lot of emphasis on better interagency collaboration in recent years.

5. 1_____2_____3_____4_____5

I'm so swamped with work already I simply can't think about new initiatives. I've got to get out from under the existing load first.

New co-operative initiatives may actually ease the work load a bit. This may be one way to lift the load.

6. 1_____2_____3_____4_____5

This co-ordinated approach entails some very real risks. I find this pressure to co-operate irritating.

Not co-ordinating also involves risks. Things will always change. Do I want to be seen as a leader or a follower? This could be an exciting and worthwhile approach.

Scoring Key 6-15 You have some strong reservations about interagency co-ordination.

16-21 You have some mixed feelings about this approach and probably could be swayed either way.

22-30 You are a natural candidate for interagency approaches!

WHAT YOU CAN GAIN AND PROVIDE THROUGH INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

	Your School/ Agency Needs	Your School/ Agency Has To Offer	Please Provide Details
Staff			
Professional expertise on certain topics	_____	_____	_____
Staff with interest in certain types of clients	_____	_____	_____
Staff with particular skills	_____	_____	_____
Secretarial or clerical help	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
Equipment			
Typing	_____	_____	_____
Duplicating	_____	_____	_____
Word Processing	_____	_____	_____
Computer	_____	_____	_____
Media-related (audio visual)	_____	_____	_____
Recreational	_____	_____	_____
Industrial Arts	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
Facilities			
Office Space	_____	_____	_____
Conference Room	_____	_____	_____
Meeting Room	_____	_____	_____
Gymnasium	_____	_____	_____
Kitchen	_____	_____	_____

WHAT YOU CAN GAIN AND PROVIDE THROUGH INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

	Your School/ Agency Needs	Your School/ Agency Has To Offer	Please Provide Details
Library			
Advantageous Location			
Other:			
Information			
On Client Needs			
On Community Needs			
Other:			
Services			
Informational			
Testing			
Counselling and Treatment			
Training in Specialized Settings			
Occupational Work Experience			
Other:			
Contacts			
With Current and Potential Clients			
With Employers			
With Other Agencies			
With Funding Sources			
With Community Leaders			
With Provincial or Federal Officials			
Other:			

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OTHER AGENCIES?

Using the list you developed of other agencies and organizations in your community, complete this questionnare to better analyze your knowledge base. Either complete a separate questionnaire for each agency or abbreviate the agency name and include several on one form.

Name of agency: _____

	No Data	Some Data	Lots of Data
1. Can you state their main goal or mission?	_____	_____	_____
2. Do you know the legislation under which they operate (if any)?	_____	_____	_____
3. Do you know the source and amount of their funding?	_____	_____	_____
4. Can you name the agency administrator?	_____	_____	_____
5. Do you personally know either the agency administrator or a staff member there?	_____	_____	_____
6. Can you describe the eligibility requirements for their clients ?	_____	_____	_____
7. Do you know the approximate number of clients they serve annually?	_____	_____	_____
8. Can you describe the main services they offer?	_____	_____	_____
9. Can you describe the expertise represented on their staff?	_____	_____	_____
10. Can you describe the facilities and equipment they have?	_____	_____	_____

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OTHER AGENCIES?

	No Data	Some Data	Lots of Data
11. Do you have their phone number and address in your office or personal directory?	_____	_____	_____
12. Do you have a cross-referral system that is regularly used?	_____	_____	_____
13. Do you engage in any joint activities currently, other than cross-referrals?	_____	_____	_____

14. What other information do you need? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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